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ABSTRACT

The ambiguities and controversy associated with long-range planning in higher education are discussed from the perspective of academic deans of schools of nursing. It is suggested that declining enrollments, increasing costs, and intense competition for survival among higher education institutions demand the formulation of explicit goals and planning for academe. The role of the dean, as middle management personnel and as academician, is viewed as being multifaceted, characterized by similarities and differences in administrative functions and expectations in the academic world. The nursing school administrator must be a scholar in nursing as well as in administration and higher education. Various levels of acceptance, understanding, and ability that exist among administrators who use and participate in the planning process are discussed, and planning is emphasized as the primary function of academic management. Controversies as to the degree of involvement of the administrator/dean and about how realistic and economically feasible future projections can be are examined. It is suggested that planning provides the opportunity to review the overall purposes of the organization. The importance of interdisciplinary planning, as well as long-range planning in the health care education field are also discussed. It is further suggested that societal changes, and changes in knowledge and technology demand a discerning ability to plan for both a school and a profession that will be in great demand in the future. (Author/SF)

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HE 012 249

No time to plan! Set priorities? Who me? Why, I can't even cope with the pressures of today!

In the popular paperback by Alan Lakein, How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life, he states, "Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now."[1]

Most people's personal plans are rather haphazard and this trend follows into their professional lives. We have been observing many of the repercussions and consequences of the lack of the use of long-range planning in economics, energy, transportation, health care, population, and of course even in education!

This paper will include a discussion of the planning dilemma from selected literature and perceptions of academic deans of schools of nursing relating to factors which hinder or facilitate long range planning.

The education milieu

As a billion dollar industry, education has functioned without a great deal of attention to planning, cost analysis, and comprehensive evaluation in past decades.[2] Administrators have weighed the benefits and relevance of programs with "judgment, perception, experience and sometimes luck"[3] as

their aid. These traditions no longer are adequate for the increasing costs, declining enrollments, intense competition and changing environments which are testing the adaptive capacity of administrators and educational institutions.[4]

Dill cautions that organizational environment is vital to survival, "Some organizations are set up in a way that permits them to respond effectively to new opportunities and challenges, but many are not."[5] The roles and functions of deans will no doubt become more complex in years ahead, Abrell projects, "As we move toward the 21st century, it seems certain that dedicated, intelligent, and sensitive educational leaders are destined to experience increased anxiety and stress."[6]

Thompson and McEwen point out that to avoid extinction, one must learn quickly and accurately in order to permit organizational adjustments.[7] Drifting from one budget planning period to the next will not suffice. Albright advises, "The formulation of explicit goals and planning will become increasingly important in educational leadership."[8]

Weaver declares "educational thinking must take into account more of the future..."[9] The current priorities may be much more significant for dealing with the crisis of today than the shaping of plans for the decade ahead.[10] Rapidity of change and obsolescence of knowledge and persons will probably increase at an accelerating rate.[11] The knowledge explosion of scientific information and technology has great impact for those who are planning for the education of health

care professionals and their relationship in meeting the societal demands and needs for health care.

All areas of higher education share many similar planning problems, traditions, dilemmas, and shortcomings as are discussed by Reller and Corbally in Designing Education for the Future;

> Higher education has developed with less coordinated planning than has been the case in elementary and secondary education. Even in elementary and secondary education, however, there has been remarkably little comprehensive research and planned development. The educational system has grown substantially through experience and as a result of pressures to meet growing needs rather than through careful analysis and planning. The resources that have been devoted to planning have been regrettably small--and have too frequently been available only for short intensive studies. Thus resources and expertness in planning have been extremely limited.[12]

Fuller proposes that the most important and moot question facing administrators and planners is..."Do large academic organizations, characterized by an enormous diffusion of power and decision making, have the ability to direct their destiny?"[13] Weaver presents the reality of the extremely long time lag between the initial plan in education and the observation of its impact which adds to the dilemma of setting priorities of time, energy and resources for the dean who must carefully budget all items and justify them to superiors in the university, the legislature, and the

public as well as to the faculty and students who must live and work with them.[14]

For any new administrator in academia there are massive amounts of new responsibilities and relationships which are acquired and must be mastered quickly. Roaden explains how the selection process conflicts with expectations:

> Deans usually have been selected on the basis of their scholarly achievements. Since knowledge is the unique domain of the scholar, the growth of knowledge has made "knowledge planners" of college deans.[15]

In this middle management administrative role, at best there are numerous difficulties and conflicts even in the more traditional academic subject areas. Dressel et al. outline duties which may fall within the realm of department chairperson or dean. His overwhelming list is as follows:

> Tradition and faculty demand require the chairman to be a scholar, but the demands placed upon the chairman include many functions; chairmen initiate action on budget formulation; selection, promotion and retention of academic staff; faculty salaries; sabbatical leaves; interdepartmental relationships; research grants; educational development and innovation; university committee membership; discipline representation; professional growth; advise to dean on departmental matters; administration to faculty relationship; new faculty orientation; departmental meetings; adequate nonacademic help; student administration, student advising; class scheduling; student personnel records; faculty load; graduate student application approval; grading standards and

> practices; and curriculum changes. Also they have knowledge of the administrative routine of the college; institutional legislative organization; government grants procedures; policies relating to graduate students; and scholarly productivity of department faculty.[16]

Baldridge studied roles and conflict in the reorganization of New York University. In relation to these middle management administrative positions he recapitulates:

> The dean is caught between the expectations of the central administration and the local departments; the department head is caught between the dean and professors in the department; the central administration jockeys among the various schools; the individual professor struggles between the expectations of the university on one hand and his students on the other. There is great role strain in the university, for each level exerts strong--and often contradictory--pressures on the role occupants. The dean is often described as the "man in the middle," but it seems more accurate to say that literally dozens of "men in the middle" are scattered throughout the formal system. George Pollach, former vice president of NYU, called this the "sandwich theory" of administration because the behavior of individuals is often related to the levels between which they are sandwiched.[17]

The dean's position as described by Gould is, indeed multifaceted. He/she is

> prophet, prime mover, keeper of the status quo, skull collector, servant of the faculty, trail blaizer, weather vane, builder, housekeeper, maverick, and lackey.[18]

It is evident that the dean has many masters to serve and publics to please. This dilemma is described quite aptly by Buchen; "If he is not a swinger, the students won't listen to him; if he is, the faculty will not."[19]

The university as a business

Planning as a major function of management has received considerable attention in the business sector. There are important similarities and differences in administrative functions and expectations in the academic world. Riley and Baldridge offer:

> Colleges and universities are different from most other kinds of complex organization. Their goals are more ambiguous and contested, they serve clients instead of seeking to make a profit, their technologies are unclear and problematic, and professionals dominate the work force and decision-making process. Thus colleges and universities are not standard bureaucracies, but can best be described as "organized anarchies".[20]

The differences are further elaborated on by Riley and Baldridge:

> The collegial leader presents a stark contrast to the heroic bureaucratic leader. The collegial leader is above all the "first among equals" in an organization run by professional experts.... The basic role of the collegial leader is not so much to command as to listen, not so much to lead as to gather expert judgments, not so much to manage as to facilitate, not so much to order but to persuade and negotiate.[21]

Barber also compares the roles of the university and business:

> Higher education has evolved into a big business and has cultivated close working partnerships with both the corporate and governmental sectors. ...Today's university resembles a widely diversified nonprofit conglomerate more closely than any other organism on the contemporary scene.[22]

The changing conditions and needs of government and the general missions of universities; teaching, research and service have changed the university so that it resembles a business and acts as a force of change in the corporate world.[23]

Relationship of planning to the functions of an academic administrator

Another area in which there exists much confusion and ambiguity is the definition of the functions of the person who is the manager or administrator of an organization. Longest states that the basic functions of the administrator are to manage the inputs of the organization to achieve the desired outputs.[24]

Although there is not universal agreement, most authors support the premise that an administrator in his/her management duties will be engaged in planning. Longest widely surveyed notable authors who agree that management consists of five basic functions; planning, organizing, directing, coordinating and controlling, and summarizes,

"The primary managemnt function is PLANNING. ...Logically, planning is the first of the management functions."[25]

In addition to the previously mentioned authors, others support the viewpoint that planning is an important function of the administrator. Karger also points out, "planning is the first and universally recognized function of management."[26] He then mentions two reasons why more executives do not engage in formal planning, one being that many administrators do not know what long range planning really is, and the other, that it is a difficult, complex, and sometimes ego shattering process. As for the length of planning Karger believes that, "One cannot have a good short range plan without a long range plan."[27]

LeBreton and Henning also agree that, "One of the most important functions performed by each executive is that of planning."[28] Newman also concludes that planning is an essential duty of every executive.[29]

Comments from a university president indicate that much planning is inadequate, being too narrow, too broad, focused on tangible, "countable" items, or obsessed with tools, nonetheless, it is inseparable from academic management.[30]

Platt explores the urgency for solution to several problems of crisis nature in the United States and throughout the world and believes that many changes produced by technology are approaching limits such as;

> ...We may never have faster communications or more television or larger weapons or a higher level of danger than we have now. This means that if we could learn how to manage these new powers and problems in the next few years without killing ourselves by our obsolete structures and behavior, we might be able to create new and more effective social structures that would last for many generations.[31]

Platt's outlook expresses both optimism and pessimism in society's attempt to deal with the future. "The future always depends on what we do and can be made worse or better by stupid or intelligent action."[32]

Traditional approaches do not provide contemporary administrators with the skills necessary to deal with the complexities as they currently exist.

Benefits of long range planning

Actual and potential benefits of long range planning are discussed in relation to numerous aspects of business and the military. Karger expresses an extremely optimistic viewpoint:

> When one considers the evidence of results of planning it is hard to understand why more organizations do not take advantage of the procedure. It has long been conceded that well planned military compaigns are necessary to success. Research indicates that similar benefits accrue to the commercial organizations that engage in formal planning.[33]

Ritvo gives illustration of advantages to planning in health

care.

> The benefits of planning are numerous. It affords more time to make a decision. It allows a perspective not given without time. Planning may allow more voices to be heard prior to conclusive actions. It may also define the problems that require solution. Planning also has the additional benefit of allowing the organization the opportunity to accumulate resources, train personnel, and restructure, if mandatory, to accommodate a new technology.[34]

Among others who discuss advantages are Newman, who believes that planning provides opportunity to review the overall purposes of the organization, avoid delays, anticipate crises and operate in a more efficient manner.[35] Kelly voices similar agreement in that it forces the organization to think beyond the current crisis and view the scope of their functioning more objectively. He summarizes that, "Most managers are forced to agree that planning is a good thing."[36]

Kelly and Newman are also in similar agreement in relation to the evaluation of planning even though there are both concrete and intangible factors.[37] Kelly views long range planning as a tool which will improve performance.[38] Many of the benefits are difficult to evaluate not only because of the abstract nature, but also the time dimensions and variables are so enormous that it is often impossible to know which variable influences the change or whether time itself has changed the persons who are now

in the position as evaluators, or whether they have different values and perceptions. The challenging problems of the 80's and 90's will make the need for long range planning even greater than at present. Administrators must learn how to more effectively utilize future personnel and tools.[39]

Limitations, barriers, and difficulties in long range planning

The expectations of long range planning may be viewed unrealistically and expected to provide a miraculous cure for the discontent of a profession or organization.[40] This unrealistic expectation may be an emotional approach without the intellectual preparation for the assignment. An administrator may lack the vision and ability to understand what is really meant by planning, the realistic expectations of what it may accomplish and the investment of adequate resources and timing for it to be of value.[41]

Enarson expresses his concern in that in many institutional settings, the efforts focus on that which is fashionable whether it be feasible or not.[42]

Hilleboe discusses several human characteristics which inhibit planning. Among them is the tendency to become excited about some unusual threat rather than examining daily practices which may have a greater and more serious potential. The provincialism of individuals is carried through into universities who exhibit the same vested interests and internal conflicts and their past habits dominate their future thinking rather than including the vast array

of variables of values, economics, social changes and politics which influence all of the disciplines somewhat differently.[43]

Fuller writes from an academic perspective with many of the same characteristics.

> ...The planning of alternative futures is of little apparent concern. The projection of current realities into the future is sufficient.[44]

Few people have been terribly concerned about planning in our society of relative comfort, abundance, and complacency until a crisis presents itself which requires an immediate solution for survival.[45]

Schaefer further comments regarding another closely related inhibiting factor to long range planning, "Many universities seem largely organized for the work of the past and not of the future."[46] This past orientation is often promoted in the guise of professionalism as White calls it one of the diseases of educators, "hardening of the categories". He further identifies the pitfalls of autonomy in that,

> ...Each (profession) sees the others discipline as being out of step with the world, while the real problem may be that neither has an accurate perception of the world.[47]

Kissinger writes in relation to planning limitations in government;

> What passes for planning is frequently the projection of the familiar into the future...Lip

> service is paid to planning; indeed planning staffs have a high incentive to try to be 'useful', there is a bias against novel conceptions...true innovation is bound to run counter to prevailing standards.[48]

Mac Stravic introduces another major barrier to planning, that of the fear of making a mistake. He argues that errors should be not an indication of failure, but realization of the setting and environmental conditions in which planning takes place.[49] This fear is complicated with the uncertainty and abstract nature of having to plan without answers provided by numbers.[50] Ewing adds the crucial roles which are played by power and politics[51] along with the personal threat of uncertainty which is emphasized repeatedly by LeBreton and Henning.[52]

Wedley refers to the attitudes of the persons in administration in that many executives have present oriented personalities. They gravitate towards actions which yield quick feedback and closure, preferring the hustle and bustle of present problems over the agonizing complexities of future events.[53] Newman would also add the psychological reluctance to change a decision, especially after a great deal of hard work and time investment has been made.[54] Newman concludes;

> No enterprise can exist without some planning. The real question is, how much?--that is, how far ahead and in what detail should planning be carried?[55]

As a basis for planning, the reliability of forecasts is of great concern. The limitations of forecasts and reliability are discussed again by Newman[56] and also by Pennington who elaborates on three distinct problems of forecasts. They can be summarized thusly, the uncertainty of forecasts, the presentation of unpopular possibilities and environmental crises which will alter the best of forecasts.[57]

Since one of the health professions cannot drastically change its functioning, policies or directions without markedly influencing the other health care providers, it is essential that the universities who educate students begin to provide opportunity for interdisciplinary planning and education for achievement of optimal health care delivery. Several authors speak to this predicament and other barriers to long range planning. Zasowska refers to many of the previously mentioned barriers such as the lack of leadership, preparation, vision, interest, inappropriate reward systems and economic incentives which are highly influential in the planning process.[58] Hussey summarizes much of the underlying rationale which is often observed and expressed by those who wish to avoid or delay the examination of plans which would obviously have a multiplicity of implications for change.

> Change of any type is anathema to most human beings. There is comfort and a feeling of false security in following the time-worn and well-known rut, often even to the extent that it goes deep

> enough for the sides to collapse and smother its occupant, killing all drive and initiative. One might almost define a natural law of human inertia which can only be overcome by the restlessness and creative urge possessed by men of vision.[59]

It is of interest to contrast some of the factors found to influence long range directions in Huckfeldt's delphi study and those in Weisensee's study of nursing deans.

Huckfeldt's[60] participants identified the faculty as most hindering change whereas the faculty in the Weisensee[61] study were among the most facilitating factors. (See table 1)

TABLE 1

Rank, Standard Deviation, and Means* of Persons, Events, Conditions, and Policies According to Hindrance or Facilitation of Long Range Planning

Facilitating Factors	Rank	Means*	S.D.
Myself	1	5.88	0.98
The present curriculum	2	5.26	1.26
Students in baccalaureate programs	3	5.06	1.02
Nursing faculty at bacc. level	4	5.05	1.22
Central administration in institution	5	4.98	1.68
Accreditation agencies	6	4.94	1.35
Rules and regulations in my college	7	4.91	1.27
Client's, (consumer's demands)	8	4.71	1.05
Neutral Factors			
Rules and regulations in institution	8	4.42	1.36
Value changes in society	10	4.46	1.17
Other administrators, (peers in other disciplines)	11	4.36	1.04
Rapid changes in technology	12	4.31	1.10
Other health related faculty	13	4.10	1.14
Hospital and agency administrators	14	3.91	1.26
Awareness of the need for long range planning by society in general	15	3.79	1.52
Hindering Factors			
Uncertainty in society	16	3.45	1.10
Financial conditions in my institution	17	3.21	1.57
Work load of faculty	18	3.09	1.39
National financial conditions	19	3.01	1.51
Statewide financial conditions	20	2.95	1.43
Time available for planning	21	2.71	1.36
Each profession protecting his/her own "vested interests"	22	2.52	1.21

*Means are based on one, being the greatest hindrance, to four being neutral, to seven being the greatest facilitation.

N = 214

In the study of nursing deans, the 22 statements consisting of persons, events, conditions and policies, when ranked according to means clustered almost equally into thirds of facilitating, being neutral, and hindering long-range planning.

The items which were perceived to facilitate LRP tended primarily to be related to people (deans, faculty, students, and clients).

Those items clustering in the neutral range tended to be related to policies, values, changes and other administrators.

Those items which ranked low (tended to hinder) were finances, time available for planning and most of all the "vested interests" of each program.

SUMMARY

Much ambiguity and confusion is associated with the definition and acceptance of planning and plans. The added dimension of time also is open to criticism. Various levels of acceptance, understanding, and ability exist among administrators who use and participate in the planning process. Most authors who discuss management and/or administrative functions seem to agree that planning is the one universal function of the person assuming this role. There are controversies as to the degree of involvement of the administrator as well as the time dimension about how far projections are realistic and economically feasible. The controversial nature of any type of planning is not to be resolved as there will always be the traditionalists who will adhere to the nostalgic past and the futurists and restless individuals who are discontent with the status quo. Proponents of long-range planning believe it is an idea whose time has come, whereas the opposition claims it is merely a fad that will pass by.

The roles and functions of the dean of the school of nursing are varied, numerous, and extremely demanding. The nursing school administrator must be a scholar in nursing as well as in administration and higher education to be able to most advantageously cope with the politics of the university system as well as being a leader of the nursing profession, as the largest group of the health care delivery team.

Values are an extremely important factor which influence the planning process, whether it be short- or long-range, or for education, business, or health care delivery. The values and outlook an individual possesses will determine how optimistic or pessimistic he/she is and will thereby influence the degree of futurity evident in the content of the plan.

Planning at any level and any time dimension is an extremely complex process. The interesting paradox exists that while promoting long-range planning on the one hand, it is frequently resisted on the other. Numerous factors influence this resistance. Among them are: personal and professional inertia, vested interests and power struggles, individual insecurity, fear of making mistakes, societal uncertainty, fear of control and/or being controlled, financial emergencies, attitudes, habits, values, attachment to traditions, inability to conceptualize the abstract,

philosophical myopia, being accustomed to the "hustle and bustle" activities (Gresham's Law), enthrallment with technology and tools, fascination with an abundance of facts and an "analysis paralysis," lack of facts and evidence, inappropriate use of data, complex political processes, sexism, changing social priorities, professional parochialism, present-oriented time perspectives, and action-oriented persons versus knowledge-oriented persons.

When examining the consequences of a plan, it is frequently difficult to determine whether a given factor, event, or condition was the primary or secondary factor which hindered or facilitated an occurrence, since the variables are intricately interrelated. The persons evaluating the change are also entering the environment from a different perspective than the planners may have intended initially.

In the past, the health care delivery system was not planned with the client's/patient's best interests always in central focus. A plethora of professional and lay articles on the current health care crisis are available. Most frequent criticisms of the health care delivery system concern the extremely high costs for inadequate or impersonal services. The present system is not effective; it is even more complex to determine which professions should change or expand their roles and functions. A societal change that has recently influenced planning is the changing role of consumers/ clients who are now represented on numerous planning boards and committees.

Another major societal change that cannot be overlooked, especially in relation to the nursing profession, is the changing role of women. The sexism that has been a hindrance to much of the progress within the profession has influenced how nurses view their longevity and commitment to the profession. The position of being a female dean in the primarily male world of academia is extremely challenging. The dean's role requires an enormous amount of fortitude to maintain a balance of priorities between superiors who make demands and subordinates who look to the dean for leadership, scholarship, and support. Rapid changes in knowledge, technology, and society demand a discerning ability to plan for both a school and a profession which will not be obsolete tomorrow.

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